



Final Presentation of MP4 Pilots
MP4 Partner Meeting Hamburg – June 2012



Firth Park: Ripples in the Pond

Project lifetime from 2007 to 2012

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Background and Aims

- Provide a **new ‘gateway’** to the Firth Park area.
- To provide **new recreational facilities, opportunities and experiences.**
- Revitalise the park, **improve the natural social and cultural offer** of the area for **all members of the community;**
- Make **use of available funding streams** targeted at the area
- Increase membership and scope of ‘Friends of’ groups.
- Engage all sectors of the community in the long-term use and care for the parks







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Process and results

What – Where – How?

- A masterplan was developed for the park in 2003, which identified a range of priority projects that should be implemented to address local need and community aspirations.
- The regeneration of the Clock Tower area was the next priority project to be delivered from the masterplan.
- In 2007, Sheffield City Council's Environmental Planning Service developed the 'Ripples in the Pond' design concept for the Clocktower area.
- Consultation was carried out with local stakeholders about this concept, including the Friends, feedback and comments taken on board, designs developed and agreed.

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“RIPPLES” SKETCH DESIGN

Firth Park - “Ripples in the Pond”

Design concept:
Flowing design breaks away from the rigidity of the existing pond while reflecting on the previous uses and actual water in the park. “Water” will be interpreted through planting and hardscape, cascading through the park from the top, through each of the activity areas and eventually tumble down a “cascade” into a entertainment stage. Natural springs will feed a wetland areas providing educational, recreational and aesthetic values.

Design elements:
Wetland area
New footpath layout
Theatre/ stage space.
Links with Cyber cafe
New planting areas
Seating.
Open space for informal recreational activities

What do you want to see????





Clock Tower Gateway - detailed proposal



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Process and results

What – Where – How?

- Secure funding for project from external sources – MP4, Lottery (Community Spaces), Viridor (Landfill Tax Credits), S106, Community Assembly, Sheffield Graves Trust, Sheffield Homes.
- Develop detailed designs
- Carry out necessary surveys (drainage, engineering, soil)
- Submit planning application
- Design work agreed & complete
- Construction Phase

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WORK IN PROGRESS



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WORKS COMPLETED





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Outlook / Next steps

What happens next?

- The Friends of group have secured further sustainability funding from the Big Lottery to deliver activities and events at the site over the next year – assisting with ongoing place-keeping.
 - Ongoing practical days on site e.g. bulb planting
 - Events and activities – community fairs, walks, entertainment, festivities.
 - Encouraging the wider community to use the site in a variety of ways.
 - Hope to generate interest in the site from the wider community – something for everyone.
- Ongoing maintenance and place-keeping of the site by SCC Parks Maintenance
- New questions around budget cuts, resources and future park maintenance – further collaboration and compromise with the Friends and wider community
- Looking forward to watching the site develop and how it is utilised by the local community.



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Lessons learnt

- Process is slow and often requires compromise from all sides – designs, funds, site limitations, resource limitations.
- Managing the community's expectations and keeping projects realistic is important.
- Developing effective and honest lines of communication & working relationships – key for the good times and the bad.
- Budget Restrictions – what can be afforded / what can't
- Staff changes – Project Officer, Maintenance Staff – potential to cause delays, uncertainties, and project changes.
- “Council Bureaucracy” – Project Management Changes, Financial Approvals, Procurement Strategy / Approvals, Contractual Arrangements.
- There were a number of delays in the project's construction caused frustrations and resulted in the opening event being cancelled
- *Communication stands out as one of the most important elements of the process and end result – integral to all aspects of the project.*

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Lessons learnt

1. **Partnerships:** Issues arising within individual partners (sections restructuring, procedural changes) outside the control of particular individual partner members can have a negative impact on the relationship with external partner and threaten successful partnerships.
2. **Governance/Engagement:** Despite attempts to widen membership Partner groups involved in decision-making may not be fully representative of the local area.
3. **Finance and Funding:** Partnership working between SCC and Friends has proved to be a successful and mutually beneficial approach to securing resources for place-making and place-keeping projects and events.
4. **Policy:** The policy framework in which place-keeping of a site sits is subject to changing political and economic context and this may have far reaching impacts on the long-term success of place-keeping.
5. **Evaluation:** SCC and the Friends feel it is too early to tell whether the site will fulfil its aims for increased use, reduced crime and improved perceptions but anecdotal evidence suggest the site is already being used more than before, and by a wider range of people.



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Lessons learnt

- The lessons learnt can be disseminated between MP4 partner network and also within SCC Parks & Countryside Department.
- How do you spread the MP4 experience locally / regionally??????

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“Famous last words”

- Ripples in the Pond was a large and complex green space improvement project with a need for the involvement of the local community.
- The project would not have been successful without the involvement of the Friends of Firth Park, but Friends of groups can have negatives.
- Is there an over-reliance on formal Friends of groups in the place-making and place-keeping? What are the alternatives?



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